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MODERN LABOR MUSEUMS

Although such phrases as "labor museums," "social museums," "museums for the welfare of the laboring classes," sound very modern, the idea itself is old, and attempts to establish such institutions have been made repeatedly. One may cite the persistent efforts in this direction of Mr. Twining half a century ago. As early as the year 1852, this excellent English philanthropist was justly of opinion that the health and material condition of the lower classes could be considerably raised by "an economic museum containing a carefully chosen collection, which would thereby steadily promote the instruction and education of the people." Twining saw his plans temporarily realized in several exhibitions: Vienna, Paris, and Brussels, 1855 and 1857. His proposals for collections of objects of domestic and sanitary economy for the use of the working classes were so valuable and comprehensive that even today they can confidently be used as the basis of similar undertakings. Twining's persistent efforts did not, however, for many years lead to the permanent carrying out of his ideas. Not until 1889 were these partially realized in the Industrial Hygienic Museum opened that year in Vienna, through the good offices of a distinguished Austrian specialist, Counselor Dr. F. Migerka, formerly chief factory inspector. An extract from the statutes of this institution will show what are its objects:

To aid in the introduction into factories and workshops of contrivances for securing the greatest protection possible against dangers to life and health in industrial pursuits; to assist all efforts directed to this end; and to help by taking the initiative and giving advice with regard to the introduction, increase, and extension, of all arrangements for the welfare of the working classes.

The museum is the property of a society which issues a fair number of publications, arranges for frequent lectures and itinerant exhibitions, and offers prizes for contrivances for guarding against accidents. Its aim, recently, has been to extend its activity by degrees to other departments of labor.

In 1889 the secretary of the Amsterdam factory-inspection office brought forward a motion to establish a Dutch museum for all

contrivances to prevent accidents in factories and workshops. The carrying out of the plan was agreed to, but it came to grief, and not until the autumn of 1899 was a social museum for the Netherlands established in Delft, at the suggestion of a Dr. J. C. Eringard. This museum is managed by Professor Traub; but it is yet only in the first stage of development. In Hamburg a social hygienic museum is about to be established by the state.

The Berlin "Central Office for Measures Pertaining to the Welfare of the Working Classes," as its name denotes, confines its attention to a rather different side of the laborer's life. A museum for all objects conducive to the welfare of the laboring classes was organized in Munich also in 1901. It was designed to be a permanent exhibition, including exhibits for protection against accidents, industrial sanitation, and housing, and it aims further at encouraging literature on these subjects. It forms a department of the home office.

The proposed German museum in Charlottenburg is far from promising to become a real social museum. Pressure had to be exerted in the Reichstag for a period of eighteen years in order to obtain the consent of the imperial government to the establishment of such an institution. The delegates Wurm, Möller, and Roesicke had urged the formation of a collection of models for protection against accidents, or at least a state grant in aid of such a collection, as long ago as 1892. Since no attention was paid to these proposals, Roesicke brought the matter forward again in the Reichstag five years later, but once more in vain. He renewed his attempt in January, 1899, and Möller likewise spoke again in favor of it, urging with warmth that the suggested undertaking might be enlarged so as to embrace, in the form of a social museum, the whole sphere of industrial sanitation in its widest extent, and also the department of practical methods for the protection of labor. Freiherr von Sturm also spoke in favor of a social museum; but the government still made many difficulties, before at last introducing into the imperial budget the necessary items, and thus showing that it had taken to heart the words of Münsterberg:

We ought to consider such institutions—i. e., museums for the protection of labor—which are of service to living and suffering men, at least as useful and important as collections and exhibitions of past civilizations, such as the Ethnological museum, or armories and picture galleries.

The Charlottenburg museum will for the present chiefly concern

itself with protection against accident, and the hygiene of food and housing; and, in view of the small means granted to it by the state, it must be very much limited in its scope. Let us hope that it will yet develop into a real social museum after the model of the one in Paris.

A real social museum up to the present time is to be found only in Paris. Twining's suggestions fell nowhere on such fruitful ground as they did in France, where they resulted in the extensive and well-classified sections of social economics which were to be seen in the international exhibitions of 1867 and 1889. At the close of the exhibition of 1889 the jury of awards expressed the wish that the material should all remain in one collection forever, in the form of a museum. The exhibitors declared themselves willing and presented their exhibits to the state. Yet it was not until two and one-half years later that a museum library society was formed, which, in March, 1892, opened a small *musée-bibliothèque* in the Rue de Lutèce for profit-saving, co-operative societies, and workmen's unions. The institution then appealed to profit-saving firms, business houses having arrangements for the benefit of their employees, co-operative associations, trade unions, social reform societies, and writers for a supply of trustworthy material, data, and publications. They received in return abundant moral and pecuniary support, especially from the Society for the Practical Study of Profit-Sharing. On the part of the state the government made efforts to substitute a larger social economic museum for the three small rooms in the Rue de Lutèce, and the national assembly had already voted the first amount necessary when a rich philanthropist offered to found a great institution of this kind at his own expense. Thus the further action of the ministry and the legislature was no longer necessary.

The sum of 2,000,000 francs which Count Chambrun spent on this scheme was enough to secure for it a permanent income sufficiently large for wide activity. The *Musée Social* was removed into one of his own houses—No. 5, Rue Las Cases—in March, 1895, and opened with fitting celebrations. Since this noble-hearted man is no longer alive, having died in February, 1899, a few remarks about him may be of interest.

Count Chambrun was born in Paris in 1821. He studied law, entered the civil service, and became a sub-prefect in 1850. A year later he was made prefect of the Department of the Jura. In 1857

he gained admittance to the legislature; in 1871 he became a member of the National Assembly, and in 1876 of the Senate. He retired from public life when he was only fifty-eight years old. He had married in 1853 the daughter of the enormously rich manufacturer of artificial crystal glass, Godard-DesMarets, of Baccarat. About the year 1880 he lost his eyesight and devoted his interest henceforth to art and literature, surrounding himself with distinguished savants, authors, and artists. He had the masterpieces of the great composers performed in his Paris palace and his villa at Nice by his own private orchestra. But this peaceful manner of life afforded him no satisfaction. He resolved to accomplish something great and good himself, instead of only admiring the performances of others, and he decided on taking up active work for the benefit of artisans and agricultural laborers. Since he had become convinced that the phenomena of social life were far too little understood and relatively received far too little attention, he desired to arouse the public conscience by the creation of a center for the compilation, accumulation, and distribution of the needful information. This took the form of the Musée Social which he endowed, as we have already said, with millions.

In addition to the erection and endowment of this institution, Count Chambrun assisted four different societies of an economic and social character. Among these was the Society for the Study of Profit-Sharing, to which he gave 50,000 francs. He founded three professorial chairs, one in the École Libre for the theory of social reform, one at the Sorbonne for the history of social economy, and one in the faculty of law for comparative sociology. Furthermore, to assist students and investigators in the field of social science, he started a society for lectures and discussion which already numbers over 150 members. He spent large sums in giving assistance to working-women at the birth of their children. He was a convinced advocate of co-operation and profit-sharing, and he was elected honorary president of the International Co-operative Alliance. Shortly before his death he was occupied with the idea of establishing a great newspaper on social reform under the title, *Le Travailleur Universel*. He also wished to start branch institutes of the Musée Social in the provinces. But unfortunately he died before these plans could be carried out.

The Social Museum, Chambrun's chief work, was organized in such a way as to open out to it large possibilities of vigorous

action. Year by year more departments have been opened, the circle of its efforts has grown wider, and the social importance of the institution is thus ever increasing. The chief objects of the Social Museum are thus described :

The gathering together and the distribution, free of charge, of records and explanatory papers of every sort connected with the different departments of social economics, and the giving of advice and instruction to all persons and societies wishing to establish or complete arrangements for raising the material and moral condition of the working classes.

The point in which it is still defective is just that on which elsewhere most stress seems to be laid, the exhibition of models for protection from accidents in factories; and doubtless this defect will be remedied in the future. In other respects the organization of the Paris institute is so excellent that it merits an exhaustive description because of its typical character.

The main spring of the activity of the Musée Social is to be found in the board of management (the director of which is Professor Leopold Mabillean, and in the work of the secretary's office. The first ensures the progress of the institution, embodies its inner and outer unity of action, and stands in close connection with all the branch departments. It is actively assisted by the secretary's office, which procures the required information and classifies it according to a scientific plan so as to make its availability permanent. Quite recently general inquiries have been made on the following subjects: maternity and care of infants from 16 societies; maternity homes, 7; orphanages, 32; children's homes, 15; the training of the blind and deaf-mutes, 5; the organization of apprenticeship, 40; measures for the protection of labor, 28; reformatories, 3; cheap dwellings, 5; alms-houses, 28; free distribution of food, 10; work for the unemployed, 25; register offices for men wanting situations, 7; assistance to persons marrying, 4; charitable foundations, 12; convalescent homes, 5; care of released prisoners, 4; wise provisions to help soldiers, 35; etc.

Many of these requests for advice and information received at the museum are of such a nature that the secretarial office cannot answer them itself. In such cases the help of the *délégué du droit* and of the *actuaire* is had in requisition, and the answer elaborated by these specialists is submitted to the respective departments of the museum for confirmation or supplement. There are seven such departments or sections: (1) for keeping in touch with so-

cieties which are occupied with social questions; (2) for agricultural matters; (3) for trade unions and co-operative societies; (4) for methods of workmen's insurance; (5) for arrangements of business firms for the benefit of employees; (6) for legal questions; (7) for research, study, and foreign missions.

A section, when applied to, appoints a reporter, and then, on receiving his report, holds a consultation and informs the secretarial office of the result. The number of written consultations produced in this manner amounted to over 1,600 up to the end of March, 1901.¹

A report of the administrative board of the museum remarks with justice that "the answers to these inquiries form a most important foundation of study for the museum, and are adapted in many respects to form the beginning of a compilation on social law." An especial catalogue planned and carried on by the secretarial office makes these consultations easily accessible and supplies a ready summary of the different results of the inquiries on every subject. Similar information and advice is given by consultation daily in the museum, and up to the end of March, 1902, in more than five thousand cases.

All papers, reports, and documents, collected by the board of directors, the secretarial department, and the different sections are placed in the archives of the society, in the shape of *dossiers*, with the exception of the brochures and other publications which find their way to the library. The collection of *dossiers* or filed papers on all points of the social question, especially on such as occupy at any particular time public opinion and the legislature in France or other countries, is one of the chief duties of the Musée Social. Motions and drafts of bills brought into the various parliaments, reports of committees and of the discussion *in pleno*, find a place equally in the *dossiers* with articles on social economy taken from periodicals and newspapers. These practical compilations are continually being supplemented, and greatly facilitate research, which

¹So far only do the statistics accessible to us extend. Among these consultations 16 are on the drink question, 16 on boards of arbitration and conciliation, 240 on insurance questions, 70 on technical literature, 90 on old-age pensions, 300 on co-operation, 80 on workmen's houses, 65 on small loans and agricultural credit, 10 on technical instruction, 28 on charitable institutions, 182 on mutual aid societies, 25 on arrangements for the benefit of employees, 40 on profit-sharing, 12 on loans free of interest, 190 on agricultural laborers' unions, 80 on laborers' unions, etc.

otherwise would be very difficult or almost impossible. So long as any file is capable of being added to, and made more complete, it remains in the secretarial office; after its final completion it is placed among the archives, from which it can still be taken out for use at any time. The *dossiers* may be said to be, in a certain sense, the kernel and also the summary of the museum's activity, and they have their natural supplement in the library, which contains a very fair collection of books, pamphlets, newspapers, and other printed matter on technical subjects. Technical newspapers are placed in the reading-room for the use of readers. In the workroom a person can read the books themselves, which, on presenting a ticket, are brought to him by one of the officials. The library is open daily from nine to twelve in the morning and two to six in the afternoon. All who wish to use it must get a card of admission, but it is not at all difficult to obtain this.

A very important and essential part of the organization of the Chambrun institute is the "Industrial and Labor Department." Its duty is to watch the manifestations and associations of industrial laborers, to study their relations with employers, and to keep a record of all measures taken anywhere that have been proved to have had a favorable influence on these relations, all the circumstances being taken into consideration. This department must keep itself up to date in its knowledge of all the latest changes, provisions, and occurrences in the relations of capital and labor. The chief source for this is the press—the daily papers, the unions' organs, and class publications. From these it can get to know the spirit of the trade unions and co-operative societies, can follow all the symptoms of the social movements and social effort, can determine what are the objects aimed at by each handicraft and trade, and can then embody the results of its investigations in suitable *dossiers*. Yet the latter would often be unintelligible and incomplete if they did not also contain information concerning the character of the trade in question, the ratio of wages in it, and other similar items. Data of this kind on different departments of industry can also be found in abundance in the press. The contents of many a *dossier* drawn from the press would offer sufficient matter for the writing of voluminous and interesting monographs on one or other industry, recounting its varying fortunes and its conditions of trade and labor.

The Industrial and Labor Department also owes much of its

material to its own investigations. Employers and workmen frequently apply to it for advice on all kinds of labor questions, and the department must in its turn apply to employers and workmen for information. Thus it continually comes into touch with the different circles of industry, and the result is an extraordinarily useful exchange of opinion. Investigators are thus placed in a position to see if the assertions and communications made by the one side are corroborated and justified by those of the other; and if the information sent in by the two sides contain conclusions that contradict each other, it acts as a stimulus to the investigators to continue their inquiries until they arrive at the truth, and at the same time they are saved from too ready a credulity and are forced to judge for themselves. The department gains a third source of information by sending deputies to congresses. Up to the present all French and internal congresses on questions of social reform have been attended by the *délégué* of the department in question, and the museum has published reports of several of these congresses. Some of these—that, for example, on “legislation for the protection of labor,” and that of the International Co-operative Alliance—have even taken place in the locality of the institute, and have been held under the protection of its name.

Of course, as we have already mentioned, the Department for Industry and Labor serves as a bureau of information for employers, workmen, and other persons interested. The inquiries refer mostly to factory regulations, apprenticeship, trade unions, the starting of pension funds, and applications for statutes of associations to serve as models. Thus the novice in social experiments, is enabled to avoid mistakes and to aspire to follow the most approved examples. The agricultural department of the museum does the same work with regard to the agricultural labor world, and plays the same part in agricultural questions as the industrial department does in connection with industrial questions. It has, for example, since its formation in November, 1897, compiled more than 700 most important *dossiers* on all kinds of questions of agricultural social economy, and especially on the raising of the condition of the agricultural laborers.²

²Under the direction of its chief it has produced during the first two and a half years of its existence the following written summaries or “consultations”: 100 on questions of insurance, 107 on matters connected with labor unions, 46 on agricultural co-operation, 42 on friendly societies or mutual aid, 26 on pension funds, 22 on insurance against accidents, 22 on co-operative bakeries, 20 on co-operative dairy companies.

This department has also in addition given a great deal of advice and information by word of mouth. Moreover, it carries on a large correspondence, arranges for the investigation of technical questions, subsidizes publications on such subjects, and itself publishes many technical books.³ It also takes part in all congresses at which questions which interest it are discussed. The organization of the 104th class—that connected with agriculture—of the international exhibition of 1900 was intrusted to it. It arranges for lectures, sends out missions of investigation into the provinces and abroad, supplies the class press with suitable items of news, frequently intervenes, on behalf of land laborers' unions, with the authorities or with legislators, makes extracts from political and agricultural newspapers, and edits a report regularly on its own doings, and also on the inquiries submitted to it by the "Agricultural Section," which consists of one hundred specialists.

The French law of April 1, 1898, concerning friendly societies imposed so much fresh work on the museum that it started a department for "mutuality" in May, 1899, on purpose to answer the numerous inquiries received and to procure the necessary particulars. A year later it made this department complete by adding a division for consumers' co-operative societies. In connection with the museum are the representatives or permanent correspondents whom the institute retains in many countries, who send in reports to the Musée Social on incidents of social reform and progressive changes of interest and importance in their respective countries.⁴ Their reports are embodied in *dossiers* and partly published in the monthly organ of the museum. The correspondents also answer questions addressed to them by the directors of the museum, and advise the latter on suitable foreign technical literature to be bought for the library.

Furthermore, the Musée Social arranges annually for a large number of well-attended lectures. Some of these it gets specialists to give in the workmen's and labor-union halls and other suitable places in Paris and the provinces. Others are given in the festival hall of the museum itself. We can divide them into two groups: (1)

³Of these some may be mentioned: *Provision for Social Needs in Italy*, *The Position of Agricultural Labor Unions*, *Mutual Insurance of Cattle*, *Agricultural Credit*, and *The Work of Agricultural Laborers' Unions*.

⁴Germany, Austria, Hungary, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Roumania, Greece, Switzerland, the United States, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Argentine.

lectures on social movements and experiments in other countries, full of practical instruction, given by men who have been appointed by the museum to investigate these questions; (2) lectures on economics and social questions of general interest given by members of the administration, governing body, or committees, of the museum. These lectures, at which distinguished men of science or statesmen usually take the chair, are intended equally for employers and workmen, for laymen and specialists, and by the report of them given in the monthly review, *Le Musée Social*, they reach a wider circle still.

The review, just mentioned, forms one of the especial publications of the museum. It contains results of some of its investigations and foreign missions, reports of its foreign correspondents, studies made by members of its own Paris staff, and also all kinds of news about the work of the institution itself. The impartiality that characterizes this journal is exemplary. The reader is here offered absolutely neutral information without any admixture of dogmatic disputation and polemics. A great part of the five or six thousand copies printed are sent free of charge, or in exchange, or at a very moderate price, to trade unions, co-operative societies, newspaper offices, libraries, and writers on technical subjects. Up to the end of 1898 this interesting paper appeared only at irregular intervals under the title *Circulaires*. The governing body of the museum expresses a hope, in its latest financial report, that "it will be able gradually to increase the importance of the periodical to such an extent that it will really be a complete review of the social movement." The museum also publishes many smaller and larger class works under the collective title, *Bibliothèque du Musée Social*. Many of these are the result of the investigations and studies undertaken for the institute.⁵ It also publishes the essays that have gained prizes in the competitions on which Count Chambrun spent so much money. The value of these prizes is not to be despised. He set aside the sum of about twenty-five thousand francs each for three competitions, the subjects of which were settled by himself: profit-sharing; workmen's and employers' associations; and workmen's insurance clubs. Of the twenty-three works sent in on profit-

⁵For example, "The Economic Rise of Germany," "The English Trade Unions," "The Rural Population of the German Empire," "Provision for Social Needs in Italy," "North American Trusts," "The Social Transformation in Modern Germany," "The German Workman," "The German Co-operative Movement," "Socialism in France," "Social Evolutions in Australia," etc.

sharing three received prizes and four were printed. Of nineteen works on the second subject five obtained prizes and were published in 1900. The third award has not yet taken place.

One especially praiseworthy undertaking of the museum is the distribution of money premiums among deserving workmen and workmen's associations. On May 3, 1896, twenty-eight artisans of over sixty years of age, who had gained the greatest merit, or had served at least thirty years in one firm, received pension-books entitling them to life-long annuities of 200 francs. The nominations are made by firms which are known for the good arrangements they make for the welfare of their employees, and the final selection rests with the committee of the museum. During the last few years there has been no presentation of premiums, perhaps because Chambrun, who was wont to defray the necessary expenses out of his own purse, is dead, and the income of the institute he founded—about 100,000 francs a year—is not sufficient for such objects.

Without doubt we have in this museum a magnificent center, capable of yet further development, for the theoretical and practical investigation of social questions. It is also strictly impartial in its character, for it forces no definite line of action on anyone, but rather helps a man to find his way in the path that he has chosen for himself. Especially satisfactory and significant is the fact that the work of the institute, far from being merely passive, is of a most active character. Of its own accord it has at different times and places started very positive social work, which has developed along most humanitarian lines. Thus it is owing to its influence that the Friendly societies have combined to form powerful regional associations. It takes a prominent part in the popular high-school movement, and directs the complete organizing of trade unions. It strives by all means in its power to justify its double task as social instructor and educator; and it has succeeded, and will probably succeed even more.

From all that has been said it is quite comprehensible that in Budapest, where some of the latest efforts for a social museum are being made, people are thinking of the Paris institute as the model to be imitated. The suggestion made four years ago by Mandello, professor in the university of that town, in an essay entitled *Social Museums and Labor Statistics*, for the founding of such a museum, was taken up two years afterward by Moritz Gelléri, director of the Association for National Industries. The association laid Gel-

léri's plan, very well worked out and adapted to suit the needs of Hungary, before the government, with a petition that it should be carried out, and the result has been that the museum was opened in 1903.

In New York an institution after the Paris model is already in existence, the American Institute for Social Service, under the direction of Mr. W. H. Tolman, the secretary of the League for Social Service. Notwithstanding the death of Count Chambrun, the establishment of branches of the Musée Social is within sight in the large French provincial towns. In Lyons the first steps have already been taken, and a district institute will be opened there next year and will carry on its work on exactly the same lines as the metropolitan museum. Even a newspaper of its own is proposed by the preliminary board of management. The Imperial Russian Technical Society in Moscow has resolved to establish a labor museum there. The program of this new institution, as stated in an account given in *Le Musée Social*, indicates a wide scope of activity along those diverse lines which have been followed in other communities by similar institutions of which brief account has already been given in this paper. The movement was started by Herr Lendenzow, who has given the sum of 50,000 rubles as a first endowment. This sum has since been largely added to by others.

LEOPOLD KATSCHER.

BERLIN.